

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6985

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR UNN

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA UNN

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AMEMBASSY MANAGUA UNN

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AMEMBASSY BONN UNN

USLO PEKING UNN

AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ UNN

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AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO UNN

AMCONSUL MATAMOROS UNN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT OCON MX

SUBJECT: POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS - MARCH 1975

1. PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA VISITS UNAM

ON MARCH 14 PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA VISITED NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
(UNAM) CAMPUS FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 1968 STUDENT RIOTS.

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ECHEVERRIA WANTED VISIT TO SYMBOLIZE THE HEALING (BROUGHT ABOUT

BY HIS DIALOGUE WITH YOUTH) OF THE 1968 WOUNDS. STUDENTS OPPOSED TO VISIT LABELED IT A "PROVOCATION" SINCE UNAM RECTOR DID NOT CONSULT STUDENTS UNTIL AFTER INVITATION WAS ISSUED (AT PRESIDENTIAL BEHEST, WE UNDERSTAND). HECKLING OF HIS SPEECH SO ANGERED ECHEVERRIA THAT HE SEVERAL TIMES ADDRESSED IMPROVISED REMARKS TO "THAT GROUP MANIPULATED BY THE CIA." EXITING, PRESIDENT WAS STRUCK ON FOREHEAD IN BARRAGE OF STICKS AND STONES. BELIEVING WORDS COULD HURT WORSE, VARIOUS GOM OFFICIALS PICKED UP CIA-WAS-RESPONSIBLE THEME.

AMBASSADOR JOVA DENIED CULPABILITY OF ANY US GOVERNMENT AGENCY IN BALANCED STATEMENT PRAISING PERSONAL VALOR OF MEXICAN PRESIDENT, AND DEPT CALLED IN MEXICAN AMB DE OLLOQUI TO EXPRESS OUR CONCERN. THIS ASPECT (I.E. ALLEGATIONS RE CIA) OF INCIDENT HAS DIED DOWN, BUT RADICAL LEFT UNAM STUDENTS ARE TRYING TO CAPITALIZE ON ISSUE WHICH PRESIDENT GAVE THEM.

2. GUERRERO STUDENT DISORDERS

COINCIDING WITH BUT UNRELATED TO (AT LEAST INITIALLY) THE MARCH 14 UNAM INCIDENT, A GROUP OF TWENTY PERSONS ON MARCH 12 SEIZED THE AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF GUERRERO (UAG) RECTORY. GROUP, APPARENTLY ACTING AT BEHEST OF GUERRERO GOV-ELECT RUBEN FIGUEROA, SAID PURPOSE WAS TO PREVENT NEWLY-ELECTED RECTOR FROM TAKING OFFICE. INCOMING RECTOR IS ALLIED WITH OUTGOING ONE, WITH WHOM FIGUEROA HAS HAD PUBLIC DISPUTES. GOV'T OF GUERRERO HAS NOT INTERVENED, OSTENSIBLY OUT OF RESPECT FOR UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY. LEFTIST STUDENTS THROUGHOUT MEXICO, ANIMATED BY UNAM INCIDENT, ARE ORGANIZING UAG SOLIDARITY WEEK TO BEGIN APRIL 4. SITUATION ON CAMPUS IS TENSE, WITH ADDITIONAL VIOLENCE POSSIBLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA ATTENDS FIGUEROA INAUGURATION APRIL 1.

3. OPEZ PORTILLO TANGLES WITH EXCELSIOR

IN LATE FEBRUARY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY JOSE LOPEZ PORTILLO (A PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANT) ENGAGED IN A HEATED EXCHANGE WITH LEADING MEXICAN DAILY, EXCELSIOR. DEBATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONCERNED AUTHENTICITY OF EXCELSIOR STORY THAT TREASURY HAD A FULLY DRAFTED, ABOUT TO BE PROPOSED LAW ESTABLISHING COMPREHENSIVE CAPITAL LEVY TAX. WHEN TREASURY OFFICIALS DENIED THAT LAW TO THAT EFFECT WAS ABOUT TO BE PRESENTED, EXCELSIOR PUBLISHED INTERNAL (BUT UNCLASSIFIED) TREASURY DOCUMENT SHOWING THAT TREASURY WAS CARRYING OUT A STUDY (TO BE COMPLETED IN JUNE) ON DESIRABILITY OF CREATING SUCH A TAX. LOPEZ PORTILLO SAME DAY CONFIRMED THAT THE

STUDY WAS BEING CONDUCTED BUT SAID EXCELSIOR DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED LAW WAS TAKEN FROM A REJECTED 1971 INITIATIVE. LOPEZ ATTACKED EXCELSIOR FOR SENSATIONALIST JORNALISM IN BITTERLY SARCASTIC DENIAL.

THOSE WHO FOLLOWED EPISODE CLOSELY PROBABLY FOUND LOPEZ DENIAL CONVINCING - AND MANY ENJOYED SEEING EXCELSIOR TAKE ITS LUMPS - BUT FIRST IMPRESSION CREATED BY EXCELSIOR STORY WAS UNDOUBTEDLY NOT COMPLETELY OVERCOME IN PUBLIC MIND. MORE DAMAGING TO LOPEZ'S PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS, HOWEVER, WAS EMOTIONAL REBUTTAL, CONSIDERED HERE TO BE UNPRESIDENTIAL BEHAVIOR.

4. DISPUTE IN ELECTRICAL WORKERS UNION

DIFFERENCES PATCHED OVER TWO YEARS AGO, WHEN TWO OF MEXICO'S THREE UNIONS OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS MERGED TO FORM THE AUTHENTIC UNION OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS OF THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC (SUTERM), CAME TO THE FORE IN MARCH. DISPUTE BETWEEN THE PEREZ RIOS AND RAFAEL GALVAN FACTIONS CULMINATED MARCH 22 WITH EXPULSION OF LATTER AND SIX KEY FOLLOWERS. PEREZ RIOS FACTION ENJOYED FULL BACKING OF CTM, OF WHICH IT IS A MEMBER. ALTHOUGH DISPUTE HAS CAUSED GOOD BIT OF PUBLIC ACRIMONY, RESULT IS THAT CTM NOW HAS EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER TWO-THIRDS OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS, WITH ONLY THE (MARXIST) MEXICAN UNION OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS (SME) UNDER INDEPENDENT LEADERSHIP. PEREZ DIED OF CANCER MARCH 27 BUT SUTERM LEADERSHIP PASSED TO A TRUSTED FOLLOWER.

5. PAN ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT

THE OPPOSITION PARTY OF NATIONAL ACTION (PAN) ON MARCH 9 ELECTED ITS 1970 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, EFRAIN GONZALEZ LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MORFIN, PRESIDENT OF PAN FOR THREE YEAR TERM. GONZALEZ DEFEATED INCUMBENT PRESIDENT JOSE ANGEL CONCHELLO IN SPIRITED TWO-WAY CONTEST. CONCHELLO HAS BEEN COMBATIVE PRESIDENT, NEEDLING GOM WITH SARCASM AND WIT, CONTESTING EVERY LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVE, AGGRESSIVELY CAMPAIGNING IN FEDERAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS. HOWEVER, MAJORITY OF PAN LEADERSHIP WAS OF OPINION PAN HAD TO PROJECT MORE POSITIVE IMAGE AND WORK TO FURTHER LONG RANGE INTEREST OF CREATING "PRE-CONDITIONS FOR DEMOCRACY." THIS MAJORITY SUPPORTED THE MORE REFLECTIVE, INTELLECTUAL GONZALEZ, WHO IN 1973 SUPPORTED ABSTENTIONIST CAUSE WITHIN PAN, WHETHER OR NOT PAN WILL PARTICIPATE IN 1976 FEDERAL ELECTIONS IS OPEN QUESTION, HOWEVER.

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ACTION ARA-10

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L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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P 020005Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6986

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AMEMBASSY BONN UNN

USLO PEKING UNN

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AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO UNN

AMCONSUL MATAMOROS UNN

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6. FOREIGN VISITS (UNCLASSIFIED)

A. VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ VISITED MEXICO
MARCH 17 TO 22. PRESIDENTS PEREZ AND ECHEVERRIA USED
THE OCCASION TO HIGHLIGHT THE MANY AREAS OF CONGRUENCE AND
COOPERATION IN THEIR FOREIGN POLICIES AND TO ISSUE A
FORMAL INVITATION FOR THE CREATION OF A SISTEMA
ECONOMICO LATINOAMERICANO (SELA - SEE MEXICO 2661).
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B. WILLY BRANDT, HEAD OF WEST GERMANY'S SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND FORMER CHANCELLOR, VISITED MEXICO AT THE PERSONAL INVITATION OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA MARCH 20 TO 24. IN DISCUSSIONS ON THE CHARTER OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF STATES (CERDS), BRANDT CAREFULLY BALANCED EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF THE CHARTER WITH STATEMENTS STRESSING THE DESIRABILITY OF CHANGES IN SOME OF CERDS LANGUAGE TO MEET THE LEGITIMATE NEEDS OF INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS (SEE MEXICO 2699).

C. PRC VICE PREMIER CHEN YUNG KUI BEGAN A NINE-DAY VISIT TO MEXICO MARCH 27. CHEN'S SCHEDULE INCLUDES MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND SIX MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET AS WELL AS TOURS OF AGRICULTURAL CENTERS AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES IN DIVERSE AREAS OF MEXICO.

7. US MEXICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS HOLD 15TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

US AND MEXICAN LEGISLATORS CONCLUDED MARCH 30 THEIR 15TH CONFERENCE, NOTEWORTHY FOR DISCUSSION OF MULTILATERAL, AS WELL AS CUSTOMARY BILATERAL ISSUES. (ILLEGAL ALIENS WERE NOT EVEN ON THE AGENDA.) CLOSING THE SESSION, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA CAPTURED HEADLINES IN MEXICAN PRESS WITH "WE WANT TO BE FRIENDS, NOT SERVANTS" EXCERPT FROM STATEMENT WHICH ALSO INCLUDED WARM TRIBUTE TO SENATOR MANSFIELD. IN LATER SPEECH MANSFIELD EXPRESSED PRAISE OF CERDS - "WITH THIS CHARTER YOU'VE AWAKENED THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLDS" - EXPRESSING HOPE THAT UNANIMOUS VOTE FOR THE CHARTER COULD STILL BE ACHIEVED. TEXT OF FINAL COMMUNIQUE BEING REPORTED SEPTEL. (COMMUNIQUE CONTAINS NO MENTION OF CERDS AS TWO DELEGATIONS COUL NOT FIND MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY LANGUAGE.)

8. GOM SUPPORT FOR PANAMA CANAL ISSUE (UNCLASSIFIED)

IN LETTER MARCH 27 PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA SUPPORTED INITIATIVE OF COLOMBIAN, COSTA RICAN AND VENEZUELAN PRESIDENTS TO COORDINATE POSITIONS ON PANAMA CANAL ISSUE. MOST OF ECHEVERRIA LETTER CITES LONG RECORD OF MEXICAN SUPPORT OF THE "LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF PANAMA" AND
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PRAISES MOVE AS ANOTHER STEP TOWARD LA INTEGRATION.
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